



The Commission on
Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

CWCSEO

Connecticut General Assembly

**Testimony of the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity
Presented to the Aging Committee
March 3, 2022**

***S.B. No. 175 (RAISED) AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESPITE CARE PROGRAM AND SUPPORTING AGING IN PLACE.**

***H.B. No. 5194 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING REGISTRATION OF TEMPORARY NURSING SERVICE AGENCIES.**

***H.B. No. 5195 (RAISED) AN ACT REQUIRING NURSING HOMES FACILITIES TO ELECTRONICALLY REPORT INVOLUNTARY TRANSFERS OR DISCHARGES TO THE STATE OMBUDSMAN.**

***H.B. No. 5196 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTRONIC REPORTING OF INVOLUNTARY TRANSFERS OR DISCHARGES BY RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES.**

***H.B. No. 5197 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF THE NEEDS OF SENIORS.**

Good morning Senator Miller, Representative Garibay, Senator Fazio, Representative Wilson, and other distinguished members of the Aging Committee; my name is Michael Werner. I am the Lead Aging Policy Analyst for the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity.

Our Commission wishes to express support for the following bills before you:

1. S.B. No. 175 (RAISED) AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESPITE CARE PROGRAM AND SUPPORTING AGING IN PLACE.

According the recently published Connecticut Healthy Aging Data Report, approximately 14% of adults age 65+ have Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia.¹ That number is anticipated to **increase significantly** over the next two decades.² The disease can be enormously stressful for both those inflicted and those who love them. Informal caregivers, such as friends and family, provide the majority of care for people with Alzheimer's.

In Connecticut, it's estimated that these informal caregivers provide **approximately \$2.87**

¹ See, page 7. https://healthyagingdatareports.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CT-Healthy-Aging-Report-2020_final.pdf

² <https://www.alzint.org/about/dementia-facts-figures/dementia-statistics/>



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billion in unpaid care to individuals living with Alzheimer's and dementia.³ That figure is valued at \$256.7 billion nationally.⁴

These unpaid caregivers often report **symptoms of depression and anxiety and have poorer health outcomes than their peers who do not provide such care**. Due to Connecticut's aging population, the need for better support for people with Alzheimer's disease is a necessity. **As written, this important bill will grant relief to family caregivers whose crucial work can be a source of financial, emotional, and physical stress.**

SB 175 helps to allow more accessibility to families and residents in need by adjusting the income and asset-based criteria for applicants, while adding in needed appropriations.

Ensuring respite opportunities for caregivers and families aligns with the State's Rebalancing efforts and will ensure a safety-net for a rapidly growing population of taxpayers, who continue to contribute to our local municipalities and who, as a public policy, serve the state well, by aging at home, in our communities.

2. H.B. No. 5194 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING REGISTRATION OF TEMPORARY NURSING SERVICE AGENCIES.

HB 5194 calls for the Commissioner of Public Health to develop a registration system for temporary nursing agencies, whose personnel live at least 200 miles away from the health care facility and for all such agencies to be registered by January 2023. This measure will help ensure Connecticut standards of continuity of care and local training guidelines are followed by these service providers.

3. H.B. No. 5195 (RAISED) AN ACT REQUIRING NURSING HOMES FACILITIES TO ELECTRONICALLY REPORT INVOLUNTARY TRANSFERS OR DISCHARGES TO THE STATE OMBUDSMAN.

&

4. H.B. No. 5196 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTRONIC REPORTING OF INVOLUNTARY TRANSFERS OR DISCHARGES BY RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES.

³ Connecticut Alzheimer's Statistics 2021 document, <https://www.alz.org/media/Documents/connecticut-alzheimers-facts-figures-2021.pdf>

⁴ See, 2021 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures Abstract. <https://alz-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/alz.12328>



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The Commission also supports HB 5195 and 5196, which help the State Ombudsman's mission and fortify data collection from nursing homes **and** residential care homes, while maintaining patient privacy provisions. These quality assurance measures will help ensure LTSS beneficiaries' rights and informed consent will be protected so that they aren't wrongly placed into inappropriate settings against their will.

5. H.B. No. 5197 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF THE NEEDS OF SENIORS.

Finally, the Commission appreciates the concept and intent of **HB 5197 An Act Concerning a Study of the Needs of Senior Citizens**. Any study with such a large scope may require an appropriation and a longer timeline to lead effectively. Further there may exist certain reports and plans available or soon to come, which may address some of the concerns of this bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today.